Tucson natives use more water than newcomers

By Brian Harrah
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Contrary to an "enduring stereotype," native Tucsonans consume substantially more water per day than newcomers, even though people new to the area may be accustomed to wetter climates, according to a University of Arizona research study.

Results from the water-habits report, just released by the UA Division of Economic Business and Research, may be used by city conservation programs, said Gary C. Woodard, a researcher with DEBR.

Woodard said he and Todd Rasmussen, a UA graduate student in hydrology, based their findings on a random survey of 1,960 Tucson Water customers.

The city of Tucson and DEBR helped fund the project, he said.

Tucson water-conservation programs may be more convincing to newcomers than to residents who have been here longer, which would account for the unexpected discrepancy in water use, he said.

About 40 percent of responding homeowners said they maintained lawns and almost 20 percent said they owned pools.

Earlier reports have wrongly indicated that lawns and pools covering the same area use about the same amount of water, Woodard said.

The UA report shows a 400-square-foot pool uses about 154 gallons per day — six and a half times more than the 16 gallons per day used to maintain a lawn of equal area.

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